

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Letters to The Editor

**Letter to the Editor:**  
If Lake Chatuge were the "Cleanest Lake In Georgia" can you imagine what that would mean?

Would Towns County have more tourists? Would property values increase? Would all residents, government agencies, and businesses benefit? I would certainly think so. However, although it's far from the worst, it needs a lot of work, and money, to improve. The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (HRWC) is the primary caretaker of the watershed. I'm sure that those of you that are regular readers of this paper have been following the many articles that have been printed over the past year explaining the existing problems and solutions to improving the lake and all streams and rivers that supply the lake. The coalition currently has many more improvements projects than they have the money to do. As a member of the Coalition I'm continually exasperated by the lack of financial support the coalition receives. The Coalition is a non-profit with no means of funding other than a few available grants and tax deductible donations from individuals and businesses.

The Coalition is having a gala fund-raising event at Brass-town Resort on 3/15 and I've been trying to get local businesses to sponsor the event, join as a business member, or at least buy a ticket and attend. Although there are a few businesses that faithfully support us every year (thank you!), in general my success rate is appalling!

I also find it unbelievable that any resident (especially those with homes bordering the Lake or a waterway) is not a member of the coalition. Is not having clean and easily available drinking water and a beautiful lake the primary reason you live here?

Many of you are in the yearly process of finalizing your 2012 Federal and State income taxes. Would additional tax deductible donations help you pay less in taxes?

Please log onto your computer type in [www.hrwc.net](http://www.hrwc.net), click on the "Donate Now" link and JOIN, or make a reservation for the Gala.

*Dave Hering*

### Letter to the Editor:

This past Wednesday, March 6th, Towns County had a terrible thunderstorm.

Lightning struck our underground propane tank, which caused a huge explosion. (Our next door neighbors told us that it shook their house so fiercely, that it even caused their electric garage opener to "die") Our propane tank wiring caught fire. The fire continued into our basement severing the water line.

In the meantime, my husband called the fire department. In just minutes, Harold Copeland was first on the scene, followed by numerous firemen and a fire truck. Because of their quick response, we fortunately, did not suffer much damage.

Thank you, Mr. Copeland and all of you fine men of Towns County Fire Department!

*God bless each of you,  
David and Carmen Denton*



**RARE KIDS;  
WELL DONE**  
By Don Jacobsen

A year or two ago Pam Druckerman, an American journalist who moved to France, wrote a book observing what she had learned about how the French raise their children. Now I've never seen France as the model for raising kids, but Mrs. Druckerman received so much positive response from American parents she has distilled the essence of her book into a kind of long memo. Let me give you some of her more useful insights.

First she says, French parents are "old-school," in that their life does not revolve entirely around their kids; they are better at saying "no" and sticking with it. Kids have chores - it is not uncommon for a 3-year-old to be expected to load the dishwasher after dinner. If you follow this column you know that I'm somewhat of a fanatic on kids and chores. From early-on they need to learn that they are contributors, not hitchhikers in the family. It begins to build responsibility into them, one of the most common complaints I get from parents.

According to Druckerman, kids don't snack between meals, and it's her take that this is one of the prime reasons childhood obesity is not a problem with French kids. Kids and parents eat the same food at mealtime and nothing

is available till the next meal. With the issue of fat kids approaching crisis proportions in America, that might be an important idea to consider.

French parents punish rarely, but they make it matter. This is about choosing your battles, and one of those battles is manners. In France, kids must always say "hello, good-bye, please, and thank you." I recommend that as your kids are growing up you begin a "Manner-of-the-Week" Club in your home where one item of gracious conduct is selected and becomes the focus of the week. Just "thank you," and "please," can be relationship-changers for your kids; it also helps them develop respect for others.

In America it is common for kids to come bursting into the room and immediately become the center of conversation. Moms and dads tell me they often can't even finish a conversation with a friend. French parents are likely to say something like, "Excuse me, honey, I'm in the middle of something; I will be with you in a minute."

Okay, so the French aren't your favorite role model - in anything. Still, wise parents accept good counsel wherever they can find it.

Send your parenting questions to: [www.DrDon@RareKids.net](mailto:www.DrDon@RareKids.net).

## The Middle Path

by Don Perry

Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Beauty, like supreme dominion is but supported by opinion."

What better place to discuss beauty than here on the opinion page? Do you think that we live in a beautiful area? Do you see beauty when you look at Hiwassee, Young Harris and the surrounding area?

I have mixed feelings on the subject. The brain is a differencing engine and there is quite a difference between the Towns County of my youth and the images that greet me upon returning home today. Driving north on State Route 75, I remember river bottoms where deer grazed. The green pastures of yesterday are now covered by mobile homes, campers and rental cabins. The spectacular view of the mountains to the north is different now. The mountains are still there, but they are scarred and scabbed-over versions of their former glory, blasted and bulldozed to torture a few more building sites from land that produces an inch of topsoil every ten thousand years or so.

Heading east into Hiwassee I notice that the lake I swam in as a child is now encircled by an almost unbroken bathtub ring of boxes crowded as closely to the shore as possible. The health department says that the water is polluted by mercury. Giant pylons march into the distance; cables and wires dissecting the surrounding hills crowded with houses. The quaint little town lined with trees that used to blend seamlessly into the countryside is gone. The trees are gone. The Americana has been replaced by metal buildings. The roadsides are decorated by an almost unbroken line of garbage, fast food cups, beer cans and plastic Mountain Dew bottles.

The country road that meandered between Hiwassee and Young Harris is now a four lane race to see who will get to the traffic light first. The highway is festooned by an assortment of business and development that leans in to the road almost like a plant straining for light, hoping to extract some wealth or some sustenance from the ancient sunlight released by burning gasoline. Precious little invites me to slow down, to stop, to get out and meander. I slow down (to 55) trying to

read a sign over a business and the truck tailgating me almost plows into my bumper.

As I approach Young Harris Mountain I am reminded of where our version of "progress" began. I remember promises of jobs that would be created by allowing development to have its way with us. I think of all the businesses that have closed in our county and I wonder where all those jobs went.

Funny thing, but our county looks very different from the real estate websites. It looks different, also, from the lofty perches along the deforested ridgelines of the high country. From there, the lake glitters like a jewel. The hard edges of the valleys below are blurred. The snaggle-toothed ridge tops are erased by the morning mists and the deepening shadows of dusk. The view is beautiful, spectacular.

In my own effort to see beauty down here in the valley, instead of dwelling on the empty 12-pack box I just ran over, I will choose instead to notice the flowers planted in front of the quaint little wood-framed house by the side of the road, the ancient oak tree in the front yard, the weathered faces full of experience and wisdom of the old couple sitting on the porch. They seem peaceful, content as they look into the distance, remembering perhaps some of the Towns County of by-gone days. They are beautiful, and Towns County is rich with their kind of beauty, if you look for it.

Few are fortunate enough to ascend to the heights where the view is better. Most of us must toil in the valleys, do what we can to earn our living and live where we can afford. We did not choose for beauty to become a commodity, nature a luxury item. Our lives are certainly not devoid of beauty; we just have to work a little harder, sometimes, to see it.



**"IT'S ON MY MIND.."**  
Danny H. Parris

### Baptists & birds

I have been watching Baptists and birds most of my life. I love Baptists and I love birds. As I write this column the snow is falling and there seems to be as many birds around my feeders as there are snow flakes. Baptists and birds have some common characteristics. For the past couple of weeks a beautiful pileated wood pecker has been feasting on suet right outside my den window. Wood peckers have sharp bills to drill and chisel into the bark of trees to gorge themselves on bugs. They have long tongues - to probe for grubs in deep tunnels. Their heads absorb a lot of shock because they have spongy skulls to protect the brain. They are always using their heads as hammers. The Robins and Brown Thrashers have been feasting on a new crop of worms. They are always busy digging up something. The Eastern Blue bird is one of my favorite birds. It seems to be humble, is beautiful in appearance and is continuously busy catching harmful insects. It is the farmer's friend. The appearance of the Blue Bird is a welcome sign of spring that better days are ahead. The tiny House Wren is little but loud. They fly upon my deck early in the morning and with great gusto they bellow out a melody that makes you think they are ten times larger than they are. They are also snoopy little birds. They will build nests in your flowerpots and quite often get into your out buildings to build nests. They are rather messy builders. Several years ago we returned home from vacation to find that one of the little rascals had built a nest on the engine of my automobile. Once, our daughter had Wrens to build a nest in a wreath hanging on her front door. The House Wren has another aggravating habit. It

perches itself in one of my birdfeeders and proceeds to sling perfectly good seed all over the ground until it finds whatever seed it is looking for. I believe it is looking for a piece of chaff among the good seed. But it irks me because it wastes a lot of good seed. Both the male and the female House Wrens have more than one mate. In fact, the males will build more than one nest to entice passing females to enter them. The Cardinals are very beautiful birds. However, they are prone to exhibit strange behavior, especially the female. They will pick a fight with their reflection in a car bumper or side mirror. They waste their energy fighting the wrong enemy. The Mocking Bird nests every year in one of my burning bushes. I call them Bully Birds. They are ornery fellows always attacking other birds. I am not sure the Mocking Bird has its own song because it is always singing the song of other birds. The Mocking Bird is just an outright thief stealing the testimony of other birds. Blue Jays are gluttons. They come into my bird feeders like B-47 bombers. They dive-bomb other birds and gobble up sunflower seeds faster than I can fill the feeders. They always make a grand entrance and scare off the other birds. They are boisterous and cause quite a ruckus. Every fall and spring I have six or eight pairs of Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks that visit and eat for a few days. They are absolutely beautiful, especially the male. But I know that they won't be with me long; they are just passing through. They are here a little while and then gone. Over the course of my ministry I have met some Baptist Birds. But you know that like God's flying birds, He made each one of them and they are precious to Him. All the birds that God created are beautiful in spite of their sometimes-obnoxious behavior. People, unlike birds can change their behavior patterns through Christ. Maybe you can identify with one of God's flying birds. Consider the fowl of the air...

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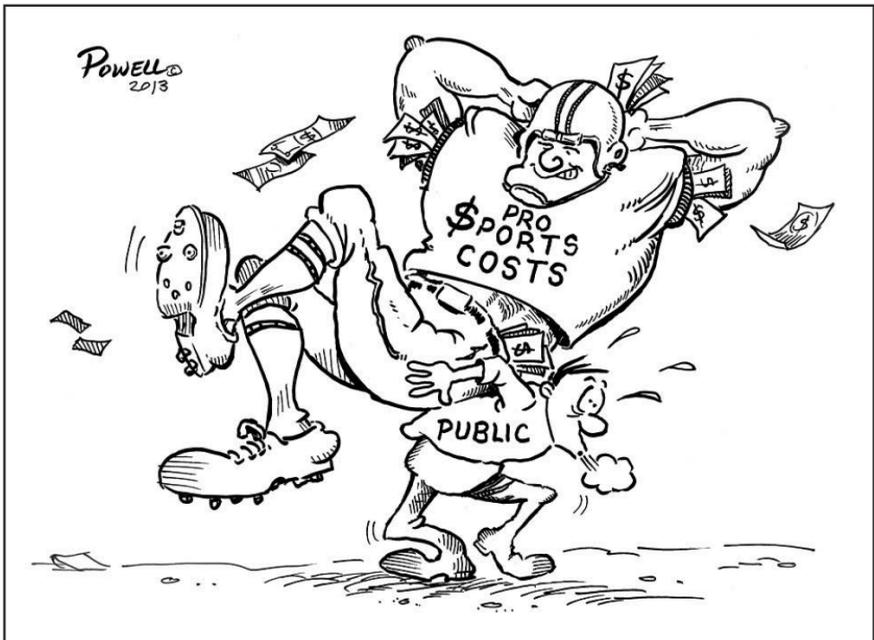
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From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

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